

# **GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN AWARD DISTRIBUTOR AND AN AWARD ACCUMULATOR BONUS GAME**

## **PRIORITY CLAIM**

5            This application is a continuation of and claims the benefit of U.S.  
Patent Application No. 09/682,369 filed on August 24, 2001, <sup>now U.S. patent No. 6,663,489,</sup> which is  
incorporated herein in its entirety.

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## **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

            The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more  
particularly to a gaming device having an award distributor and an award  
20    accumulator bonus game.

            Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming devices that  
provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a bonus  
game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or  
credits in addition to the awards associated with the base game of the gaming  
25    device is one way to enhance player enjoyment and excitement.

            Known gaming devices having bonus games employ a triggering event  
that occurs during play of the base game operation of the gaming device. The  
triggering event temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a  
player to enter a second, different game, which is the bonus game. The player  
30    plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game.  
In most instances, the bonus game is relatively short in relation to the time that